



## Infectious Disease Prevention – DTaP

In an effort to reduce infectious disease that can be prevented with vaccination, Colorado will increase the percentage of children who are up to date on their diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTaP) immunizations when they enter kindergarten. For a child to be up to date when entering kindergarten, the child must have received five DTaP shots or four shots if the fourth is administered on or after the child's fourth birthday.

### Why is this important?

Infectious disease kills 300 American children per year, despite the availability of vaccines. Pertussis, a vaccine-preventable disease, has resurged in the United States. In 2010, Colorado had 212 reported pertussis cases among children 6 years of age and younger, representing nearly 40 percent of pertussis cases statewide. DTaP vaccine is an effective method to control disease spread and helps protect school-aged children against potential classroom exposure.

### Where are we?

Each year, the Colorado Immunization Program conducts a survey to assess progress toward meeting school immunization requirements. In Colorado, students are asked to receive the required immunizations, claim an exemption or be in the process of getting immunized. For the 2010-11 school year, the state immunization program determined 92.6 percent of Colorado kindergartners were up to date for DTaP. In Colorado, this means that students have either received the required immunizations, claimed an exemption, or are in the process of getting immunized.

### Where do we want to be?

Increase by 2 percent the number of kindergartners in Colorado who are up to date when they go to school.

Attaining this goal positions Colorado to achieve the Healthy People 2020 objective that 95 percent of children be vaccinated with four or more doses of DTaP at school entry. Healthy People 2020 includes immunization coverage goals for all ages, but this milestone age group was earmarked with the highest coverage goal, further illustrating the importance of protecting this vulnerable population.

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## What is being done?

A two-pronged approach will be used to drive the 2 percent increase in DTaP coverage rates among Colorado kindergartners. The first step is to better educate parents and providers on the importance of immunizations. Colorado recently developed [www.ImmunizeForGood.com](http://www.ImmunizeForGood.com), a parent-focused website that has received national recognition. To ensure health care providers are equally educated on the benefits of immunization, the Colorado Immunization Program also has launched a new provider education series in 2011. The educational webinars will continue in 2012.

In the second approach, the immunization program will expand access and utilization of the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS) in child care facilities, head start programs, WIC programs and elementary schools. This will allow staff at these facilities to review immunization records online and quickly identify any children who need additional vaccinations to be fully vaccinated.

## High-risk groups

The [vaccine schedule](#) is made to protect children when they are most susceptible to disease. There is a window of time when infants are too young to be fully protected by vaccines and are especially vulnerable to common diseases such as pertussis. Vaccinating children on the recommended schedule can prevent the spread of disease to these defenseless babies. Of the 212 cases of pertussis in children 6 years and younger, 19 were children too young to be vaccinated.

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